

# Forest Tax & Stewardship News

Fall 2007

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## Woodland Owner Organizations

By Jim Warren  
DNR Forest Lands Section Chief

**B**ecoming a member of a woodland owner organization dedicated to stewardship of the forest is an excellent way to become involved in sustaining Wisconsin's forest resources. While we as individuals have different needs socially, one of the greatest benefits of membership is knowing that when needed, there is a network of people you can turn to that have or are facing similar questions about their woodland. These groups also provide a vehicle for information sharing about sustainable forestry and specific opportunities to learn about the proper care of your woodland.

Much of the information sharing is accomplished through literature and field days. Events may include tours of privately-owned woodlands, tree identification hikes, a tree planting workshop, or bird identification walks. Woodland owner organizations offer a diverse array of educational opportunities for members.

If learning more about the opportunities that exist for your woodland and the stewardship of Wisconsin's forest resources interests you, consider joining one of the woodland owner organizations in the state. You will find information on three of these organizations within this edition of the newsletter.



## Steps for a Successful Timber Harvest

By John Force  
Cooperating Consultant Forester

**W**isconsin possesses an abundant forest resource; 16 million acres of the state are forested. Over nine million acres of this forest are owned by private, non-industrial owners. If you are among them, at some time you will likely consider a timber harvest to manage this resource. Timber harvesting is

designed to 1) utilize the resource when it is mature, 2) provide for regeneration of desirable species, and 3) accelerate the growth of desirable residual trees.

Timber harvesting is a serious project; it will determine the aesthetic, economic, and ecological value of your timber stand for many years to come. It should not be undertaken haphazardly. It should involve professional assistance. Your local DNR forester or a private cooperating consultant forester is available to assist

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Photo credit: Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

## A Note from the Editor:

Thank you for reading the Forest Tax & Stewardship News! We hope you enjoy this publication. Please feel free to send us topic ideas and comments, as our goal is to include information you find useful regarding the stewardship of your Forest Crop Law (FCL) or Managed Forest Law (MFL) land.

This publication is sent to the primary landowner listed for each FCL or MFL order (along with other interested parties). We are only able to send the newsletter to the primary landowners at this time and do not maintain a separate mailing list for other owners of your property. If you know of other landowners who may be interested in reading the newsletter, we encourage you to pass this newsletter along when you are finished reading it or refer them to the online version of our newsletter at:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/ftax/newsletters/>

We hope you enjoy this edition!

Julie Polasky

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you in the process. The expense of professional assistance is usually more than compensated for by earning higher stumpage rates, avoiding trespasses, and improving your forest for the future.

Manage your forest on a sustainable basis, using the following guidelines:

1. Have a forest management plan in hand, prepared by a DNR or a reliable consulting forester, to determine what should be harvested and when it should be harvested. (Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law landowners already have this resource!)
2. Before hiring a forester or signing a timber sale agreement, ask for references. Request a visit to other lands they have managed or harvested.
3. Have an accurate estimate of the timber volumes to be harvested (prepared by your forester). Professional assistance will ensure that you are paid properly, in a timely manner, and for the full current market value of your timber.
4. Use a written contract with the harvester to ensure that you are not liable for accidents in the woods and that you will be paid properly, at specific rates for the timber harvested by species and product. Examples of

such contracts are available on the University of Wisconsin-Extension Office and DNR websites or from consulting foresters.

5. Be sure that your property boundaries are fully marked by a forester. In some cases, a registered surveyor's help may be required for this step, but remember that timber trespasses and legal costs are time consuming and expensive.
6. Have your timber sale inspected before closing the timber sale contract to ensure that 1) all designated trees have been harvested, 2) un-designated trees have not been harvested, 3) roads, trails and landings are properly graded or cleaned, and 4) payments are complete and meet expectations.

Never harvest timber without a written contract, always seek some professional advice from reliable foresters, and always get an accurate estimate of the timber to be harvested. If you take this little additional time, you will have better assurance of a successful timber harvest, be able to provide for desirable regeneration of forest species, and protect the future value of your land. If you have further questions regarding your timber harvest, contact your local DNR forester.



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The publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, audio tape, etc.) upon request. Please call 608-267-7494 for more information.

# American Tree Farm System in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee

By Randy Sthokal  
WTFC Tree Farm Administrator

**T**he mission of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) is to promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry.

With the Department of Natural Resources' recent enrollment of Managed Forest Law (MFL) lands into the ATFS Group Certification program, the Wisconsin Tree Farm program now includes over 36,000 landowners on close to 2 million acres. MFL Group Certification has been set up so that it is free to owners of 10 to 10,000 acres who have site-specific MFL forest stewardship plans. The MFL lands are certified as one large group of individually managed forests. Group certification is a third-party auditing process for evaluating groups of landowners and certifying their well-managed forests under a single certificate held by the group organization.

Wood harvested from lands in the ATFS Group Certification program is considered "third-party certified." The Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee (WTFC) is the state committee of the ATFS, which is a program of the American Forest Foundation (AFF). The WTFC actively works with the ATFS to demonstrate to forest industry, retailers, and the public that the ATFS Tree Farm

program is the premier and primary supplier of certified wood products from family forest lands in the United States.

Along with the many benefits of good forest management, the WTFC provides family forest owners with recognition, educational opportunities, and the opportunity to participate in the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year program.

All MFL landowners are eligible to participate in the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year program. Corporations, organizations, and other entities are ineligible. This program recognizes private landowners who have done an exceptional job of forest management on their properties along with an exceptional job of promoting forestry. The process begins at the county level where a Tree Farmer is nominated by a forester. Landowners may need to ask their forester to consider their Tree Farm for nomination and can assist the nominating forester by locating any paperwork the landowner may have relating to timber harvests and promotional activities relating to forestry taking place on their Tree Farm.

All county selections are automatically entered into a district competition. There are seventeen districts in Wisconsin. The State Tree Farmer of the Year is selected from that year's district winners. County winners receive a recognition certificate suitable for framing; district winners also receive an engraved plaque. The State Outstanding



## MFL Landowners in the ATFS Group Certification Program Can Display the ATFS Tree Farm sign!

**Requirement:** Completed license agreement (see website or contact information)

**Cost:** \$35 for one sign, \$10 for each additional sign

**Website:**  
<http://www.witreefarm.org>

**Contact:** Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee (715) 252-2001 or [wtfc@athenet.net](mailto:wtfc@athenet.net)

Tree Farmer of the Year receives a Stihl chainsaw safety kit along with a certificate redeemable for a new Stihl Chainsaw at a local Stihl-authorized dealer.

For more information on the Tree Farm program, or the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year competition in Wisconsin, contact the WTFC at 715-252-2001, email us at [wtfc@athenet.net](mailto:wtfc@athenet.net), or visit the Wisconsin Tree Farm website at [www.witreefarm.org](http://www.witreefarm.org).



## Do we have your current address? Please send address changes to:

Forest Tax Section, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 7963, Madison, WI 53707



# Emerald Ash Borer: What You Can Do to Prepare Your Woodlot

By Andrea Diss-Torrance  
DNR Plant Pest & Disease Specialist and  
Virginia Mayo Black  
DNR Forestry Communication Specialist

**A**nyone who has or appreciates ash trees on their property or in their community should be concerned about the threat posed by the emerald ash borer (EAB). Where this foreign pest has become established, it has eventually eliminated all ash species. So far it has killed an estimated 20 million ash trees in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Ohio, and Pennsylvania and in Ontario, Canada. Last summer, it was found for the first time in Illinois in the Chicago suburbs, less than 50 miles from the Wisconsin border. While EAB will eventually reach our state, there are things we can do to slow its spread and reduce the impacts it will have on your forests.

EAB is a small insect, 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch in length. Natural spread by flying adults is estimated at between 1/2 and 2 miles from the trees in which they developed. If EAB was limited to flying on its own, we wouldn't need to worry about these insects for a long time. Unfortunately, people have inadvertently spread EAB long distances, principally on nursery stock and firewood. Quarantines and cooperation from the nursery industry have largely prevented the movement of EAB on nursery stock in recent years, but movement on firewood remains a

problem. Because EAB is dependent on people for long distance transportation, landowners have a lot of control over whether it is brought onto their property. Avoid moving firewood long distances, even between your properties if they are more than 50 miles apart. You will go a long way to preventing early establishment of EAB and a host of other invasive pests and diseases on your property if you obtain your firewood close to where you will use it. If we all act together to prevent spreading EAB, we may be able to increase the number of years we are free of this pest for much of the state. The longer we can delay EAB, the more likely we will be able to develop tools, such as new pesticides or application techniques, biological controls, and resistant ash varieties, to manage it.

In addition to preventing spread, woodlot owners can take actions to reduce the damage EAB will do when it eventually arrives on their property. Don't wait for EAB to arrive; start work soon. If you can spread the changes to your woodlot over several thinnings, you will minimize the stress to your forest. You also don't want to be in the position of losing all your ash in a short time due to the borer, as such heavy losses could jeopardize Managed Forest Law (MFL), and possibly Forest Crop Law, requirements! Here are some ideas to consider on your property; however, always remember to check with your local DNR forester first!

- Over the next few thinnings, reduce the ash component of your woodlot to the minimum required for your plan or 10%. Remove unhealthy trees first.
- Favor non-ash regeneration.
- In new plantings, limit ash to 10% or if site conditions require the use of ash to capture the site from competing vegetation, plan on allowing other tree species to dominate the final woodlot. Ash may not survive to be a crop tree.

There are several pests and diseases that can cause ash to decline, so don't panic or act in haste if one or several ash are dying back on your property. Take a look at the signs and symptoms typical of EAB at the Wisconsin Emerald Ash Borer Resource website at <http://emeraldashborer.wi.gov>. If you are still concerned, call the Wisconsin EAB hotline at 1-800-462-2803. Staff there can go through the signs and symptoms you are noticing and in most cases they can determine if the problem is EAB-related or if it is due to another factor. If necessary, they can send an inspector to visit your trees if the symptoms are suspicious.

More scientific and practical information about EAB is available online at the following websites:

- Urban and Community Forestry (DNR): <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/>
- Forest Health Protection (DNR): <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/FH/Ash/>
- Frequently Asked Questions – EAB and the MFL program (DNR): <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/FH/Ash/ea-b-faq-mfl.htm>
- Multi-state Emerald Ash Borer Information: <http://www.emeraldashborer.info>. This internet page has information from states where EAB has been detected. The site includes information about quarantines and related regulations.

The emerald ash borer is an invasive insect native to Asia. The beetle has killed an estimated 20 million ash trees in Canada and the Great Lakes states, including Michigan and Illinois. An EAB adult is 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch in length and is metallic green in color.



Photo credit: David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

# Public Access to Tax Law Lands

By Shelley Wrzochalski  
DNR Forester

**L**ands enrolled in the Forest Crop Law (FCL) program or Managed Forest Law (MFL) program are designated as open or closed to public access. Landowners who have land enrolled in the MFL program have a choice to close their lands to public use (closed land) or to allow the public use of their property (open land). All lands enrolled in the FCL program are open to public access.

The activities allowed on tax law lands are slightly different, depending on which program the land is enrolled in. On FCL land, only hunting and fishing are allowed. On MFL land open to public access, hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing and cross country skiing are allowed. On MFL land closed to public access, the landowner has the right to restrict or permit access as desired.

## The landowner's rights and responsibilities on open lands include:

- Restricting the access of motorized vehicles.
- Designating a specific access point or route to the open land when not directly off a public access. The access must be reasonable and clearly identified.
- Posting signs approved by the Department to show the access route or identify the location of closed lands.
- Restricting access within 300 feet of any building or active commercial timber sale that conforms to the management plan. Cutting firewood for personal use does not apply.
- Granting additional uses to the public if the landowner so desires.

On open land, the landowner may not deny access to any person, restrict the number of people accessing the land, or post signs which restrict or give the appearance of restricting permitted

uses. Continued violations may lead to withdrawal of the MFL land. Posting violations can be subject to citations and/or forfeiture not to exceed \$500. Trespass issues should be referred to the local Sheriff's Department and cannot be enforced by the DNR.

## The public's rights and responsibilities while using open lands include:

- Accessing the land only for the purposes allowed by that program.
- Accessing the land without asking permission.
- Accessing the land only by foot unless given other permission by the landowner(s).
- Using traditional hunting methods including baiting and temporary tree stands. Land, trees, or other property may not be damaged.

The public may not use motorized vehicles without the landowner's permission, use open lands for target practice or sighting in firearms, or damage the property or anything on it. Damage is a civil matter and should be pursued with the Sheriff's Department, not the DNR.

The public should know where they are on the property at all times. As a courtesy, users should contact landowners to notify them of their usage but are not required to.

The public may submit an order form (form 2450-190) to obtain the open lands listing for individual counties within the state. The order form is available from your local DNR forester, local DNR service center or from the website listed below. FCL and MFL lands are contained on separate lists and may be requested individually. There is a charge for the listing and prices vary due to the amount of open lands in a particular county. The public may also access the open lands listing through the internet at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/ftax/openland.htm>. The list is updated annually to reflect new

enrollments, transferred lands, withdrawals, and changes in the open/closed designations.

As an MFL landowner, you may change the open/closed designation of the land twice within the term of the order (25 or 50 years) or at the time that the land is transferred or portions are withdrawn. (Remember, only MFL land can be closed to public access!) Simply write a letter to the Forest Tax Section requesting a change in the open/closed designation of the land and send it to: Forest Tax Section, P.O. Box 7963, Madison, WI 53707. All owners must sign the request. Include the MFL order number, legal description of the land and the number of acres involved in the request. You may contact your local DNR forester for assistance. The written request must be received in the Forest Tax Section by December 1 in order for the change to become effective the following year (January 1). There is no cost to change the designation; however, your property taxes will increase if you are changing your MFL land to closed status (see the article, "New MFL Tax Rates").

In the MFL program, up to 160 acres per ownership per municipality may be closed to public access. Ownership is based on the name that is listed on the deed/legal title to the land. Land entered under MFL in other years with the same ownership and in the same municipality is counted as part of the total 160 acres that can be closed. Of the 160 acres closed, not more than 80 acres (or two entire legal descriptions, government lots, or fractional lots) entered prior to 2005 can be closed. Check with your local DNR forester if you have questions on the open or closed designation of your land.



## Notice!

Seek your DNR forester's advice before buying, selling or transferring tax law land. This will help you avoid unwanted withdrawals and penalties.



# A Few Ideas for Managing Deer Browse on Tree Plantings

By Greg Edge  
DNR Forestry Area Leader

**A** 2005 reforestation survey of DNR foresters identified deer browse as the most significant barrier to successful tree planting in Wisconsin. A 2006 survey of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) hardwood plantings confirmed that deer browse is significantly impacting the growth and survival of hardwood seedlings. Deer populations in Wisconsin have continued to increase well above management goals since the 1980's, resulting in significant reported losses to both natural and artificial regeneration.

So what is a landowner to do when faced with this beast? There are just about as many reported methods to stop deer browse as there are diet schemes. Landowners must sort through fact from fiction to keep from losing their seedlings and their pocketbooks. Another complication is that deer populations and feeding habits vary across the state, so a method that is

effective in one area may not work in another. What we have learned is that no matter where you are in Wisconsin, deer will play a significant role in the success of your tree plantings. Foresters and landowners must assess the local deer browse risk and plan for appropriate preventative measures in their tree plantings. This article will review a few approaches that are currently being used in Wisconsin to successfully limit or stop deer browse. Each method has advantages and disadvantages. These are certainly not the only ways to manage deer browse, so if you have a great idea, please share it with your local DNR forester!

## Physical Barriers

**Tree Shelters** — The pros and cons of this barrier device have been discussed by foresters and landowners since tree shelters were introduced in the 1970's, so there will not be a lot of detail on tree shelters in this article. There are many good research papers looking at the benefits (e.g., deer browse and rub protection, rapid juvenile growth, lower moisture stress, ease of herbicide application) and shortcomings (e.g., cost, maintenance, stem dieback, light blockage, rodent dens, bluebird mortality) of using tree shelters. Tree shelters can protect hardwoods in areas with severe deer browse and are a good option for some landowners. Cost and maintenance problems have prevented their widespread acceptance and use.

One interesting side note is a DNR tree shelter study in Green County that was recently re-measured after 12 growing seasons. The survival rate of the sheltered trees actually decreased by 5% compared

to unsheltered trees. After 12 years, the plastic shelters had not completely deteriorated and were girdling trees or acting as habitat for bark insects. In addition, there was no significant height difference between the sheltered and unsheltered trees. The juvenile height growth advantage of the sheltered trees was lost once the trees emerged from their shelter.

**Polypropylene Fencing** — Polypropylene fencing is a temporary alternative to woven-wire or other permanent forms of fencing. It is constructed from a



Photo credit: Gregory Edge, WDNR

Tree improvement crew installing deer fence in Crawford County.

high-density polypropylene mesh that is UV-treated. The fencing is usually 7.5 feet tall and comes in rolls 100 to 330 feet long. The fence is attached with hog ring staples to a high-tension wire. The bottom of the fence is either staked to the ground or attached to another high-tension wire to prevent deer from running underneath. The tension wire can be strung from 8' posts or from existing trees if protecting a forested opening.

The DNR Tree Improvement Program has been using this type of fencing for the past three years to protect some of its progeny tests. It is fairly easy to install and has done a good job of keeping out



Photo credit: Kristin Peterson, WDNR

Richland County CRP plantation. Note the heavily browsed hardwood seedlings located between the conifer rows.

the deer. To give you an idea of cost, we recently paid approximately \$1.50 per foot for materials. This included a heavy-duty version of the fence, high-tension wire, 10-foot metal t-posts at a 20-foot spacing, staples and wire tensioners. For comparison purposes, it would cost you \$3,960 in materials to fence in 10 acres, while it would cost you approximately \$4,400 to place tree shelters on 100 trees per acre over that same area. The main limiting factor for this fencing method will still be cost. Perhaps the cost factor can be reduced if fence materials can be utilized twice; however, we have yet to discover the longevity of the polypropylene.

**Bud Caps** — A variety of different materials are used to protect a tree's terminal bud during the dormant season. Index cards, envelopes, waterproof paper, tinfoil, balloons and plastic mesh are just a few examples. Commercial bud caps are available, but many landowners prefer to make their own to save money. Bud caps are mostly used on conifers since deer eat conifer seedlings primarily during the late fall and early spring when bud caps can easily be installed without interfering with tree growth. Hardwoods can also be bud capped during the dormant season; however, they typically get browsed during the early growing season when the new vegetative shoots are emerging and bud capping is not possible.

The Tree Improvement Program has been bud capping white pine progeny tests in Oneida and Jackson Counties for the past five years. We have used small waxed paper envelopes that were originally designed for corn pollination bags. The bag is placed over the terminal bud and stapled to the needles. The caps have worked well in both plantations, although deer browse pressure has been modest. Bud caps may not be enough of a deterrent in areas with very heavy browse pressure. Here are some tips we have learned through this experience: placing a slit or air hole in the top of the envelope promotes good air circulation and helps prevent damage to the bud, keeping the terminal bud completely hidden seems to discourage curious deer (if the deer can see the bud, they try to eat it), and



Photo credit: Gregory Edge, WDNR

Bud caps on a white pine progeny test in Oneida County.

our average bud capping rate is about 250 trees/hour/person (we have also removed the bud caps each spring, but this is a much faster operation).

## Repellents

Many commercial deer repellents are now available and heavily marketed to landowners. But are these repellents effective? As one USDA study states, "(repellent) efficacy varies greatly." In other words, some work, some do not work, and results may vary. Several foresters that I have spoken with in Wisconsin and Minnesota believe these products can be effective and they encourage landowners to give them a try.

A 2001 study conducted by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services and National Wildlife Research Center evaluated the effectiveness of 20 commercially available repellents on a captive deer herd. This study concluded that fear-inducing repellents (i.e., those emitting a sulfurous odor from compounds such as meat protein or egg) were the most effective. Taste repellents, which are commonly used here in Wisconsin, were much less effective in this study (Trent, Andy; Nolte, Dale; Wagner, Kimberly. 2001. Comparison of Commercial Deer Repellents. Tech Tip 0124-2331-MTDC. USDA Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development Center).

The Hayward State Nursery conducted a series of commercial deer repellent trials

on the Governor Knowles State Forest in 2003, the Vilas County Forest in 2004, and the Brule River State Forest in 2005. Jack pine seedlings were treated with five commercial repellents in fall and then evaluated for deer browse the following spring. All the repellents tested reduced deer browse damage relative to the control trees. Similar to the USDA study, the fear-inducing repellents generally performed the best. Taste repellents generally were less effective. Gordon Christians, Hayward State Nursery superintendent, says these are just preliminary trials and that more testing is needed in Wisconsin.

Repellents appear to be an effective option to reduce deer browse; however, expect variation in your results depending on factors like local deer density, deer eating habits, tree species and weather conditions. Repellents must be reapplied to maintain effectiveness. The USDA

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Photo credit: David Harbec, WDNR


Jack pine seedling treated with repellent (top) and untreated control (bottom) at the Brule River State Forest.



study found that repellents could provide protection for several weeks, but expect shorter protection periods during the growing season when new foliage is emerging and heavy rains may be frequent. Although deer browse may occur year-round, timing repellent applications to critical browse periods can improve your success. Conifer seedlings need special protection during the late fall and early winter prior to snowfall and again in early spring after snowmelt. Hardwood seedlings may need to be treated multiple times during the summer (May through August) to protect each new flush of growth. Finally, remember that the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) considers all deer repellents a form of pesticide and therefore, commercial applicators must be certified.

## All Options On The Table!

Managing deer browse on tree plantings is a critical aspect of reforestation success. It requires continued hunting pressure to control deer populations, good plantation design and often times the use of physical barriers and repellents. There may be no single solution, so an integrated (and creative) approach is often the best. Tree shelters can be costly and high-maintenance; however, they may effectively protect critical areas, such as travel corridors where browse pressure is high. Plastic fencing is also costly, but may be an excellent way to protect high-value hardwood plantings. Bud capping is a simple but effective method, especially for conifer protection from fall to spring. Several commercial repellents have been shown effective in field trials and offer a way to treat large areas of trees for less money.

Whatever methods you choose, I believe that our reforestation practices (especially for hardwoods) must become more intensive to combat the deer browse challenge. But the good news is that better methods of protecting tree seedlings are available and new methods continue to be developed. For a list of product suppliers, check out our new "reforestation supplies" vendor list on the nursery web page at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/nursery/generalinfo/supplies.htm>. 

# What Are You Doing With Your Forest Land?

By Members of WWOA

**L**et me tell you what my friends, Evelyn and Glenn Charlson, have done with their 37 acres of woods in northeastern Wisconsin. The land has been in the family since the early 1900s, and became Glenn's in 1979. In 1984, Glenn had a road bulldozed into a tenting site along the river where they began to build a cabin for a weekend retreat.

By 1986, they realized the land had more potential than just letting nature "manage" it. They cleared "planting lanes" in two acres of sumac brush and planted 500 European larch seedlings. Unfortunately, the trees needed more sunlight — and all but six of them died. A couple of years later, they planted 150 red pine trees. Again, their lack of success was disappointing, not a very encouraging start for a couple of neophyte woodland owners. Many people would have given up, but the Charlsons persisted. Where could they find the assistance they needed to help their land?

In 1992, they attended a conference on woodland assistance in their county. Glenn and Evelyn then became members of Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA). They absorbed the general information available to new members, read the quarterly magazine, *Woodland Management*, and attended WWOA meetings. They joined the local Wolf River Chapter of WWOA and learned from their neighbors. They joined the American Tree Farm System too.

Through these activities, they learned what kind of help was available from foresters and organizations interested in guiding them in their efforts to learn what would and would not work. After getting a "new vision," the Charlsons contacted the local Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources forester who helped them understand the possibilities for their woodland. He helped them develop a written management plan — a blueprint of their intentions on the land.

Their land had about 26 acres of natural woods, well-stocked with large aspen and hardwoods which needed thinning, and 11 acres of fields, no longer tilled. Revenue from their thinning on 10 acres was used to bulldoze new trails and seed them with a grass mix, providing food for ruffed grouse and wild turkeys. The trail system was designed for access for timber management and fire protection, as well as being attractive for other wildlife, hiking, hunting, and skiing.

This was just the start! By vigorously pursuing their dream of making their land productive and sharing their enthusiasm with others, they were recognized by the American Tree Farm System as the 2002 North Central Regional Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year for an 11-state region. They received WWOA's Distinguished Service Award for their volunteer service to WWOA.

By joining WWOA, the Charlsons gained much needed practical information, saving them time and money while increasing their satisfaction from participation in field days and conferences. Along the way, they have developed many lasting friendships with fellow WWOA members.

You are invited to join the Charlsons, as members of WWOA. WWOA, a nonprofit organization, serves Wisconsin's private woodland owners and provides a variety of educational activities. WWOA's website, [www.wisconsinwoodlands.org](http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org), can help you get started today! For a FREE informational packet about WWOA, call 715-346-4798, email [wwoa@uwsp.edu](mailto:wwoa@uwsp.edu) or write WWOA, PO Box 285, Stevens Point, WI 54481. 

## DNR Tree & Shrub Applications

Seedlings available starting October 1. Contact your DNR forester or order online at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/nursery/order/>



# Wisconsin Tree Farmers of the Year

By Shirley Bargander

DNR Forestry Team Leader, WTFC Vice-chair  
& WTFC Recognition Committee Chair

I am happy to announce that Don and Inez Krohn of Adams County have been selected as the 2007 Wisconsin Tree Farmers of the Year. The Krohns have owned their 34-acre Tree Farm for 52 years and have been following a management plan since 1992. The Tree Farm became certified by the Forest Stewardship Council in 2007. Juris Repsa, cooperating forester from Domtar Industries, Inc., is the nominating forester.

Don's interest in the Tree Farm program began many years ago through Robert Dosen, industrial forester formerly with Nekoosa Papers Company, who is active with the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee (WTFC). Robert encouraged Don to become involved with the program, specifically regarding the acreage on the Big Roche-a-Cri Creek in the town of Big Flats in Adams County. In addition to Juris Repsa, Don and Inez have worked with several different foresters over the years including Russ Roberts (formerly of Georgia-Pacific), Nina Stensberg from the Department of Natural Resources and Jeff Niese, a consulting forester.

Throughout the years, the Krohns have completed several forest management activities on their property. Red and white pines were planted and 5 rock wing dams were installed to control soil erosion along the banks of the Big Roche-a-Cri Creek. Mature jack pine and oak were harvested on 7 acres to release the white pine understory. Timber stand improvement work and follow-up sanitation were performed on 10 acres to control an outbreak of Sphaeropsis shoot blight. Several different tree plantings were completed. A new firebreak was recently constructed and firebreaks are mowed annually. The Krohns have also erected blue bird and wood duck houses, established food plots, and planted wildlife shrubs.

The Krohns have actively been promoting the Tree Farm program, as well as sound forest management. Don writes a monthly article for the *Wisconsin Rapids*



Photo credit: Krohn Family

Inez and Don Krohn, 2007 Wisconsin Tree Farmers of the Year

*Tribune* and has written numerous articles for the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA) magazine, *Woodland Management*. He has given presentations to service clubs about land stewardship and hosted a Tree Farm field day in 2001. Don chaired a committee in 2006 to design, construct, and dedicate a sign commemorating the Cottonville forest fire. The Krohns assisted with planting trees on properties that suffered losses during the Cottonville fire. They also provided a tour to DNR State Forester Gene Francisco (retired), DNR Regional Leader Arvid Haugen and the Governor's Council on Forestry Chairman Dan Meyer to show how beneficial the landowner grant program was on an actual project.

The Krohns are members of WWOA, as well as the Central Sands Chapter, and are members of the WTFC. They have attended 7 National Tree Farmer conventions around the nation and Don is currently serving as the public information officer for the convention held in Wisconsin. Don and Inez were honored by WWOA in 2006 for educational outreach efforts following the Cottonville fire, selected as Adams County Tree Farmer of the Year in 1996 and voted runner-up in 2002 for the Wisconsin Tree Farmer of the Year.

Don has several accomplishments to his name, including volunteer public information officer on the DNR Wisconsin Rapids Incident Management Team, emergency fire warden for the DNR for 30 years, honored by the DNR for significant service in wildland fire prevention, officer and director of the

local Chamber of Commerce, volunteer co-director of the Art & History Museum in Port Edwards, organizing director of the new South Wood County Community Foundation, volunteer to assist the Governor's Council on Forestry with "Questions and Answers About Wisconsin's Forests," and member of WWOA's publication committee.

All of the Krohns' hard work on their Tree Farm, as well as their outreach efforts, have earned them the title of 2007 Wisconsin Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. Congratulations to Don and Inez Krohn!

There are many excellent Tree Farmers around the state! If you wish to be nominated, talk to your forester and request to be nominated. This is an opportunity to be recognized for your hard work and to share it with others!



I would like to extend congratulations to all of the 2007 Wisconsin Tree Farmer of the Year winners as well as their nominating foresters. This year's winners are:

**District 3:** Duane & Julie Kuesel – Pierce County – county & district winners. Nominating Forester: Gary Zielske – DNR forester.

**District 5:** Roland & Ruth Rueckert – Oneida County – county & district winners. Nominating Forester: David Czysz – Stora Enso forester, District 5 Chair.

**District 8:** Forrest & Jill Schoen – Eau Claire County – county & district winners. Nominating Forester: Chris Widstrand – DNR forester.

**District 11:** Don & Inez Krohn – Adams County – county, district & state winners. Nominating Forester: Juris Repsa – Domtar Industries forester.

**District 12:** Wagner Family Tree Farm – Waupaca County – county & district winners, & runner up for state winner. Nominating Forester: Ben Baumgart – DNR forester.

**District 17:** Ashborne LTD. Corporation – Waukesha County – district & county winner. Nominating Forester: Michael Sieger – DNR forester.



# Sustainably Managed Family Owned Forestland

By Gerry Mich  
WFF Executive Director

**H**istorically, Wisconsin Family Forests (WFF) has consisted primarily of neighborhood alliances of local forest landowners that share their experiences and pool their needs for professional assistance and additional information. Through local alliances that focus on sustainable forestry practices, members can work with neighbors on common issues, like invasive species or coordinated harvests, which strengthen community connections. WFF also has many supporters who do not own forestland, but firmly believe in the work that we do.

WFF is also working on two pilots of the Wisconsin Healthy Forest Program that is aimed at assisting woodland owners

to find the resources to help them care for their woods. This program does not require membership in any group, but rather it is primarily aimed at providing a service to woodland owners. WFF believes that this new pilot program has the potential to reach many woodland owners who want to take care of their woods, but do not want to belong to a group. The program is based on using local woodland owners who act as "forest coordinators." These coordinators have a landowner's perspective, are able to hear what the landowner wants, and can share the wisdom they've gained from their experiences in the woods. They give trusted advice with no strings attached, just for the health of the land. We hope that this program will eventually provide an incentive for forest certification too.



Photo credit: David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

## Join Now

If you believe in what we are doing to promote sustainable forestry in Wisconsin, we would be glad to have you join us. You can support our efforts and know that together we can make a difference. Send this form with a check made payable to Wisconsin Family Forests.

**Wisconsin Family Forests**  
**625 E. County Road Y, Suite 700**  
**Oshkosh, WI 54901-9731**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## WFF Annual Membership

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Champion \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$40  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leader \$500     | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$100    | <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$50   |                                       |

## Supporting a Local Alliance

If you would like to support a local alliance, write the name of the alliance in the space provided below and indicate what portion of your membership fee you want them to receive. Alliance information is available at [www.wisconsinfamilyforests.org](http://www.wisconsinfamilyforests.org).

I wish to support the \_\_\_\_\_  
alliance with \_\_\_\_\_ dollars.

For more information, contact Gerry Mich at  
[gerry@wisconsinfamilyforests.org](mailto:gerry@wisconsinfamilyforests.org) or 715-213-1618.

**You can make a difference in your woods! We can help!**



# Managed Forest Law Changes

By Kathy Nelson  
DNR Forest Tax Section Chief

**T**his fall there will be three changes to the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program that may affect landowners currently in the program and those landowners thinking of entering it. These changes take effect on November 1, 2007.

## 1. MFL Land Eligibility and MFL Petition Fees.

The MFL program was changed to allow more land to be eligible for entry. Landowners with 10 contiguous acres can now enter lands that are split between municipal lines (between townships, villages, cities, and counties). The previous requirement was that landowners needed to have 10 contiguous acres per municipality.

Since the DNR must record all entries of land under the MFL program with the Register of Deeds Office in each county, petition fees will change so that landowners applying to enter land in more than one county within the same entry year will be required to pay a \$20 petition fee per county.

New petitions for designation/conversion will be printed to reflect this change after the rule change becomes effective on November 1.

## 2. Catastrophic Loss Provision.

Catastrophes can happen at any time and in many different ways. Catastrophes cannot be predicted or planned, but changes to the MFL program will now make it easier for landowners to qualify for the catastrophic loss provision and provide for more equitable payment of yield taxes after timber is salvaged. These changes include:

- Increase in the reduction in yield tax payments for fire-caused tree mortality from 30% to 70%. Fire-caused catastrophes reduce the value of timber more than windstorms, insects, diseases and other natural events, so these catastrophes will receive a greater reduction. All other catastrophes will continue to benefit from a 30% reduction.
- Decrease of the acreage of land that qualifies for catastrophic loss from 10 acres to 5 acres. This change will allow for more land to qualify for catastrophic loss and provide additional incentives for landowners to clean up and harvest trees in smaller areas.

After any catastrophic event, landowners should contact their local DNR forester to discuss salvage of the damaged timber and to re-evaluate

the management plan. Changes to the management plan may be needed to ensure that the forest is healthy and actively growing.

## 3. Severance and Yield Tax Rates.

New Forest Crop Law severance and Managed Forest Law yield tax rates will go into effect on November 1, 2007 and will be effective through October 31, 2008. Timber harvested within this time frame will use the new 2008 rates.

Severance and yield taxes are collected by the Department and returned to the local municipality as partial payment of taxes that landowners deferred while their trees were growing. The rates that will be used will depend on the species and product that was harvested.

Landowners can estimate their severance and yield tax bills by noting the volume of timber and species cut in the harvest and referencing the current yield and severance tax payment rate tables. These new tables will soon be available online through the following website: <http://www.dnr.wi.gov/forestry/ftax/>. (The new stumpage rates in NR 46.30, Wis. Admin. Code, will be available online at: [http://www.dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/harvest/NR\\_46.htm](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/harvest/NR_46.htm).)



# New MFL Tax Rates

By Carol Nielsen  
DNR Private Forestry Specialist

**E**very 5 years, the tax rates billed in place of property taxes for Managed Forest Law (MFL) land are recalculated by the Department of Revenue. The tax is included on your property tax bill under the section for special charges. The following table shows the rates in effect through 2007 and the new rates for 2008 through 2012. Remember that the rates that apply to your land are based on the year your land

was entered into the program and if the land is OPEN or CLOSED to public access.

The tax rates billed in place of property taxes for Forest Crop Law (FCL) land entered after 1972 are not changing in

2008. The FCL tax rate for those lands will remain at \$1.66 through 2012. The FCL tax rates for lands entered prior to 1972 or entered as special class remain at \$0.10/acre and \$0.20/acre respectively and never change.



	MFL Tax Rate effective through 2007 (per acre)	NEW MFL Tax Rate effective 2008 through 2012 (per acre)
<b>Land entered before 2005</b>		
OPEN to public	\$0.83	\$0.67
CLOSED to public	\$1.95	\$1.57
<b>Land entered after 2004</b>		
OPEN to public	\$1.46	\$1.67
CLOSED to public	\$7.28	\$8.34



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